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ABSTRACT

A family literacy program designed for parents of preschool and elementary school children is described and evaluated. Participants were 20 Korean families in which the parents had limited English proficiency. Parents read with children and were instructed in the use of reading strategies that could be used at home. Various whole language techniques were used for parent instruction. Instructors helped parents arrange reading schedules and educated them in the use of various public services such as libraries and reading programs. Attendance records indicated that parents who participated regularly in the program had children who displayed greater confidence and interest in reading with teachers at school. Participating parents learned reading techniques and vocabulary words from children's books and songs and became more familiar with community resources. Program difficulties included lack of parent time, due to heavy work schedules, and winter weather conditions hindering participation. Materials collected for use in the program will be distributed in a family literacy instructional booklet, and are being translated into Korean. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Family Literacy for Parents with Limited English Proficiency

Director: Dr. Jin H. Yu
Coordinator: Katherine Barker
Fiscal Year: July 1, 1993 to June 30, 1994

Agency Address: 6055 N. 5th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19120
Contract Number: 98-4045
Federal Funding: 13,580.00

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ABSTRACT PAGE

Title: Family Literacy Parents with Limited English Proficiency

Project No.: 98-4045 **Funding:** 13,580.00

Project Director: Dr. Jin Yu **Phone No.:** 215-276-8830

Contact Person: Katherine Barker **Phone No.:** 215-276-1622

AgencyAddress 6055 N. 5th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Purpose:

Many Asian parents with pre-school and elementary school children are unable to read English to their children. The purpose of the proposed project was to break the barriers of language and culture by poviding the parents with English tutoring and reading instruction.

Procedures: 20 Korean families were chosen based on reading levels and interest in the program. Parents read with children and were instructed on employing reading strategies that could be used at home. Instructors helped parents arrange reading schedules and educatedthem on various public services such as libraries and reading programs.

Summary of Findings:

Instructors measured the frequency of parents and children reading together. Attendence records indicated that parents who regularly participated in the program had children who displayed greater confidence and interest reading with teachers at school. Parents learned reading techniques and vacabulary words from children's books and songs.

Comments (Conclusions, Findings, Barriers, if any):

The number one barrier to programs participation was that Korean parents often work ten or more hours a day, six or seven days a week. Parents had little time to divote to the program and to reading at home with their children.

Also, the weather conditions during the winter months made it almost impossible for parents to stay after school or even bring their children into school.

Products (if applicable):

Collected materials to appear in the How-to-Do Family Literacy Instructional Booklet for Korean parents with pre-school and elementary school children. The booklet is undergoing translation to Korean and when complete, will be distributed to the ESL department of the

Descriptors (To be completed only by Bureau staff): Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy education.

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The Korean Community Development Services Center
Family Literacy Project

Introduction

The Korean Community Development Services Center's Family Literacy Project proposed to develop a culturally specific literacy program for Korean parents and children with limited English proficiency. The project was developed and conducted during the twelve month period of July 1993 to August 1994.

The program provided Korean parents, who speak English as a Second Language, with needed English and literacy training that would enable them to read English with their children at home. The general purpose of the program was to increase children's reading levels and to foster parental involvement in children's schoolwork. The primary objective of the program was to encourage parents to participate in their children's English education by increasing the communication between parents, children and English speaking teachers. The program developed activities to build parent's confidence in working with and reading to children in English. The secondary objective was to educate Korean parents about various community resources such as children's reading programs, adult ESL programs and other services provided by public libraries and organizations.

The effectiveness of the program was measured by the frequency of parents and children reading together. Parental awareness and involvement with children's education was measured by attendance and the frequency of participation in program activities.

Statement of the Problem

Korean parents with preschool and elementary school children are often unable to read English to their children. Because many of these parents are recent immigrants, they are in need of English training and services. There are currently about 50,000 Koreans living in the Philadelphia area, 95% of this population arrived less than 15 years ago. Recent Korean immigrants have little time to invest in obtaining English Literacy training due to a heavy work schedules.

Many Korean adults are employed in small "mom & pop" stores or are street venders in the Center City area of Philadelphia. These parents work six or seven days a week, ten or more hours a day. This schedule leaves parents little time to spend on improving their English literacy and working with their children on reading at home.

Korean children are also in need of English training because they speak primarily Korean at home. Korean parents are concerned that their children will be behind when entering elementary school because they have not had language experiences equal to those of their peers who speak English as a first language. Korean parents are primarily concerned with the English education of their children, but at the same time, they do not want to forsake their children's learning of Korean. For this reason, the development of a culturally specific literacy program for Korean families is critical for the program's success.

Goals and Objectives

A. To improve literacy and reading skills
- -to educate parents in written and spoken English.
- -to enhance children's reading development & improve their reading levels.
- -to install an enjoyment of reading and love of books.
- -to model reading behavior and techniques to parents who may be unfamiliar with reading English to their children.
- -to suggest books and materials that are effective and especially useful for ESL children and adults.

B. To increase family relations
- -to promote intergenerational family relationships.
- -to promote cultural and family pride in a multicultural setting.
- -to encourage parents to play an active role in their children's education.
- -to encourage parents to interact with teachers.

C. To develop life skills
- -to enhance personal and social competency of participants (adults & children).

-to educate and give access to resources and services that will improve participants abilities to cope with problems.

-to educate adult participants about community resources and available social services such as public libraries, children's reading programs and adult ESL programs.

-to teach parents cultural norms of interacting with school administration and classroom teachers.

-to teach parents how to utilize their time spent with children on reading.

Location and Program Participants

The family literacy program conducted September 1993 to May 1994 at the Children's Learning Center, 5224 Rising Sun Avenue, located in North Philadelphia. The family literacy location is currently a Korean and English Bilingual school for Korean Children. English instruction is given in the Morning hours while Korean is given by Korean teachers in the afternoon hours.

The program began with the recruitment of twenty Korean families, from a total of fifty affiliated with the Korean daycare. Korean parents were informed of the program through teachers and bilingual handouts printed in both Korean and English. Twenty families were chosen as program participants based on the amount of interest shown in the program and by overall attendance the first few weeks. Family Literacy instruction was given on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

There were two primary instructors for the program. The Program Coordinator, Katherine Barker, certified in ESL education and familiar with Korean culture and language, was the primary instructor. A bilingual instructor, Patricia Kim, was also active in the program. Both instructors were experienced in working with Korean children and Parents.

Methodology and Procedures

Various Whole Language methodology was incorporated into the program to serve the basic needs of Korean ESL parents and children. Lessons were designed to be functional and relevant to participants daily lives and experiences. Parents were taught purposeful, useful and communicative English that can easily be used at

home with all of their children. It was vital for instruction to build on and complement the lives and language experiences of Korean parents and children.

Parents were introduced to popular American children's reading books and literature, such as the Spot series and the various books by Eric Carle. Many of these popular books will be introduced to children in public and private elementary school systems. Parents were also taught popular children's songs and nursery rhymes. It is critical for Korean parents and children to have shared knowledge of popular stories, books, songs and nursery rhymes. Educating parents on the materials their children will be learning in elementary school provides parents with greater opportunities to participate in their children's education. Most importantly, familiarity with the educational materials gives parents confidence to work with their children on English schoolwork.

Instructors taught reading strategies that could be used at home and modeled effective reading techniques and behavior. Parents were instructed on how to use questioning and predicting during reading. Parents read with children in front of the two instructors to demonstrate learned reading skills.

Instructors helped parents arrange reading schedules at home with their children. Busy parents were provided with tips on using free time effectively and finding the time help with children's schoolwork. Children checked out books and recorded reading times.

Lastly, parents were educated on various public services such public libraries and reading programs for themselves and their children. Practical and useful information such as checking out books, returning books, finding books and paying fines and fees were reviewed.

Methods of Evaluation

In meeting the objective of improving literacy and reading levels, children's progress was recorded by daytime and family literacy instructors. Attendance records and parent's reading charts indicated increases and decreases in parents participation in the program. Parents signed in their arrival and departure times and instructors kept records of meetings and conversations with parents and children.

Instructors noted that students, who participated in the program with their

parents, displayed greater confidence in reading with teachers . These children learned to feel comfortable with books and using books in the classroom. Parents learned reading techniques and vocabulary words from children's songs and stories. As indicated by reading charts, many parents increased the amount of time they spent at home doing schoolwork with their children.

Life skills were developed through program participation. Parents developed their skills in interacting with school teachers and their children's educators. Parents developed English communication skills through frequent practice with teachers. Instructors noted a decrease in the various tensions associated with communicating in a second language with teachers due to increased interaction and exchange. Parents gained a greater knowledge of what their children were learning in school

Finally, parents learned about using community resources such as the public library. All participating parents got library card and used them with their children. Parents learned of other ESL programs and services in the communities and in some cases, direct referrals were made.